

Career Academy Incentive Fund Rubric

The Career Academy Incentive Fund rubric consists of three sections each totaling 100 points (300 points total). Priority level and strength of proposal will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined in [Iowa Administrative Code 281-46.13\(4\)](#).

SECTION 1: Determining Priority Level of the Submitted Proposal – 100 points

To qualify as a *Priority 1* or *Priority 2* proposal, the definition of a regional center must be met, and evidence must be provided of confirmed partnerships between participating school districts and community college.

Regional Center Definition: Physical structure wherein career academies are delivered

Must include at least **four (4) career academies** and must serve

- A combined **120 students** from **two (2)** public school districts; **or**
- A minimum of **four (4)** public school districts

Determining Priority Level

Priority	Description	Points
Level 1 100 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand new regional center with a minimum of 4 or more new career academies OR addition of 4 or more NEW career academies to an existing regional center • Evidence of participation of at least four 4 public school districts (or a combined 120 students from 2 public school districts) with a partnering community college • Career academies must be delivered through a regional center 	
Level 2 80 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement or enhancement of existing career academies at a regional center OR addition of anywhere from 1-3 NEW career academies to an existing regional center • Evidence of participation of at least four 4 public school districts (or a combined 120 students from 2 public school districts) with a partnering community college • Career academies must be delivered through a regional center 	
Level 3 60 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of a new career academy or improvement/enhancement of an existing career academy that is NOT delivered through a regional center • May be individual offerings delivered by one school district • Delivered through alternative partnership arrangements other than a regional center 	
	Section 1 Total:	

SECTION 2: Determining Eligibility of the Submitted Proposal – 100 points

To encourage grant proposals for new projects, points will be awarded to applications based on whether or not they have received an award in the past, whether the award was for a new or existing project, and how long ago the institution received an award.

There are typically two grant cycles (i.e., fall and spring) per fiscal year. However, if all funds are awarded during the fall grant cycle, a spring grant cycle will not be held.

Determining Eligibility

Eligibility	Description	Points
100 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The community college or school district has never received a CAIF grant award.	
80 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The community college or school district has received a CAIF grant award, but four grant cycles have passed since the award was granted (i.e., the institution did not receive an award during the previous four grant cycles).	
60 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The community college or school district has received a CAIF grant award, but three grant cycles have passed since the award was granted (i.e., the institution did not receive an award during the previous three grant cycles).	
40 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The community college or school district has received a CAIF grant award, but two grant cycles have passed since the award was granted (i.e., the institution did not receive an award during the previous two grant cycles).	
20 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The community college or school district has received a CAIF grant award, but one grant cycle has passed since the award was granted (i.e., the institution did not receive an award during the previous grant cycle).	
0 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The community college or school district received a CAIF grant award during the previous grant cycle.	
	Section 2 Total:	

SECTION 3: Overall Strength of Proposal – 100 points

The following metrics and descriptors will be used to evaluate each of the outlined criteria in section two.

Career Academy Incentive Fund Evaluation

Metric	Description
Strongly Evident	This area is a strength. The evidence and explanation supplied supports all or parts of the criteria and provides a strong rationale and significance of how the program is meeting this initiative.
Evident	This area is satisfactory. The evidence and explanation support all or parts of the criteria and rationale is indicated how the program is meeting this initiative.
Somewhat Evident	This area needs improvement. The evidence and explanation minimally support all or parts of the criteria and it is unclear how the program is meeting this initiative.
Not Evident	This area needs major improvement. The evidence and explanation do not support the criteria or none is supplied.

There are four primary criteria identified for evaluation, each consisting of sub-categories evaluated independently.

Criteria 1 – Career Academy Program Offerings (15 points total)

- a. Diversity of Programs – 10 points
- b. Occupational Alignment – 5 points

Criteria 2 – Career Academy Structure (20 points total)

- a. Coursework – 5 points
- b. Work-Based Learning – 5 points
- c. Industry-Recognized Credentials – 5 points
- d. Integration of CTSOs – 5 points

Criteria 3 – Sustainability (30 points total)

- a. School District Commitments – Enrollment – 10 points
- b. School District Commitments – Contracts – 10 points
- c. Budget Proposal – 10 points

Criteria 4 – Regional Center Plan (35 points total)

- a. Partnership & Stakeholder Engagement – 15 points
- b. Improving Access – Students – 15 points
- c. Improvement Access – Transportation – 5 points

Criteria 1 – Career Academy Program Offerings – 5 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(a) Diversity of Programs	10 points	6.5 points	3 points	0 points	

Diversity of program offerings are considered, and cumulative program offerings provide students with access to a diverse array of coursework, and the overall offerings reflect the majority of CTE service areas.

To consider: Programs selected are value added, will actively engage students and encourage participation. Consideration should be given to educational programs that align with high-demand occupations and integrate industry-recognized credentials (IRCs), work-based learning (WBL) and career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) into high school/community college academic instruction.

Criteria 1 – Career Academy Program Offerings – 5 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(b) Occupational Alignment	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points	

Evidence presented to support program offerings are in alignment with high-demand occupations as identified by the state workforce development board.

To consider: A strong indicator of occupational alignment (in line with program offerings) is ensuring labor market data is evaluated, and consideration is given to regional workforce needs.

Criteria 2 – Career Academy Structure – 5 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(a) Coursework	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points	

A sequence of coursework, inclusive of all aligned middle school, high school and community college offerings that constitute the career academy are included for each participating district; and community college concurrent enrollment coursework is appropriately placed and sequenced within program offerings (*articulation is shown*).

To consider: The career academy model as a whole, building on high school programming linked to community college programming, is evaluated. In the absence of high school CTE offerings in alignment with community college career academy program offerings, discussions (if any) that have taken place to expand or improve future alignment of high school offerings within partnering districts are provided.

Criteria 2 – Career Academy Structure – 5 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(b) Work-Based Learning	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points	

Current or planned WBL opportunities are robust and integrated into program offerings. Opportunities may be at the high school and/or community college level. Industry support is indicated to sustain quality experiences for students. WBL refers to opportunities and experiences that include those defined by Senate File 2411: 1) sustained project-based learning in partnership with an employer, 2) simulated work experiences aligned with industry-recognized credentials, 3) high-quality pre-apprenticeships aligned to an apprenticeship, 4) student learner programs, 5) internships and 6) apprenticeships.

Criteria 2 – Career Academy Structure – 5 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(c) Industry-Recognized Credentials	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points	

Students earn, or are prepared, to earn a third-party IRC, the credential is integrated into coursework/programming and/or the credential is utilized for assessment.

Criteria 2 – Career Academy Structure – 5 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(d) Integration of CTSOs	5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points	

CTSOs or other CTE-related co-curricular opportunities are integrated into the program's high school and/or community college instruction and/or future planning of CTSOs or other CTE-related co-curricular opportunities are indicated. There is active encouragement of student participation in the CTSO or CTE-related co-curricular opportunity.

Criteria 3 – Sustainability – 10 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(a) School District Commitments – Enrollment	10 points	6.5 points	3 points	0 points	

Actual historical enrollment is provided, if applicable, and projected enrollment is provided for each participating high school over a five-year period, including a breakdown for each academy program offered. Enrollment is of sufficient size to support and sustain program initiatives.

To consider: A strong indicator of sustainability is student enrollment commitments from each school district. You may consider district commitments in proportion to each district's general student enrollment based on K-12 enrollment data. Additionally, for long-term sustainability, a strategic plan has been considered or developed to attract/recruit students, showcase offerings and raise awareness of CTE.

Criteria 3 – Sustainability – 10 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(b) School District Commitments – Contracts	10 points	6.5 points	3 points	0 points	

A formalized agreement/contract is signed by each participating district with board-approved commitments from the school districts and community college.

To consider: A strong proposal will have affirmed, long-term, meaningful commitments. This provides evidence which demonstrates the level of investment each partner has contributed to sustain the initiative long-term. Agreements should outline the responsibilities of each institution and/or resources each participating institution will provide (i.e., duration of partnership, enrollment guarantees, resources provided, staffing, funds, etc.).

Criteria 3 – Sustainability – 10 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(c) Budget Proposal	10 points	6.5 points	3 points	0 points	

A comprehensive multi-year budget plan is provided. Proposal includes a summary of all costs outlined, including contributions of partners and a complete list of other funding sources identified to support the initiative. Refer to Appendix A for allowable uses of grant funds.

To consider: A strong budget proposal, with evidence of adequate funding, is an indicator of sustainability. Applicants should provide a project timeline and a detailed summary of total projected costs needed to start up and maintain the project, including overall costs and a projected multi-year summary outlining expenses and monetary contributions from all sources (i.e., operating expenses, personnel expenses, annual equipment/supplies/maintenance, learning materials, funding generated from district enrollments, other funding sources, etc.).

Criteria 4 – Regional Center Plan – 15 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(a) Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement	15 points	10 points	5 points	0 points	

The proposal fits strongly within the regional plan. Evidence is demonstrated that the program solicited feedback and input from appropriate stakeholders. Evidence is provided on the level of collaboration and coordination from the regional planning partnership (RPP), school districts, community colleges, business/industry partners and other stakeholders related, but not limited, to overall plan content, modification and delivery.

To consider: Strong consideration will be given to applicants who present evidence of regional planning. Providing your RPP's regional plan ([281 IAC 46.10\(5\)\(f\)](#)) may be included as evidence. Purposeful deliberation and coordination with the RPP are needed. A strong indicator of additional partnerships is the level of business and industry support provided and level of inclusion of high schools/community colleges when determining programming and implementation of initiative. Applicants may consider letters of support from business/industry partners, including school districts, which address the need for the proposed program offerings and/or supportive measures of each partner for engaging students in learning experiences.

Criteria 4 – Regional Center Plan – 15 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(b) Improving Access – Students	15 points	10 points	5 points	0 points	

The proposal improves access and reduces barriers for students, identifying and addressing equity gaps. Strong alignment with efforts to reach underserved regions and areas of low CTE enrollment offerings is clearly evident. Future expansion efforts to increase access may be indicated or a plan for future involvement of partnering school districts is thoughtfully considered.

To consider: Applicants should evaluate barriers to enrollment and access specific to their region. The application should indicate what those barriers are and how the initiative will address those issues. The goal is to provide equitable access for all students within the region. Supporting data for underrepresented populations and underserved regions may be included as evidence. Priority will be given to applicants that provide substantial evidence demonstrating that the location of the facility significantly improves access for high school students to CTE programming.

Criteria 4 – Regional Center Plan – 5 points

	Strongly Evident	Evident	Somewhat Evident	Not Evident	Points
(c) Improving Access – Transportation	5 points	N/A	N/A	0 points	

Transportation is provided to students to allow for equitable access for participating students/districts.

Appendix A: Allowable Expenses – Career Academy Incentive Fund

Funding issued under the Career Academy Incentive Fund shall be used by the recipient for purposes outlined in the proposal approved by the department to support the development of career academy infrastructure, including regional centers as defined under [Iowa Administrative Code 281-46\(12\)](#).

For purposes of this rule, allowable expenses include the following ([Iowa Administrative Code 281-46.13\(1\)](#)):

- a. Purchase and improvement of grounds, including the legal costs relating to the property acquisition and surveys of the property.
- b. Construction of buildings and roads to buildings.
- c. Purchase and lease-purchase option agreements for buildings.
- d. Rental of facilities under Iowa Code chapter 28E.
- e. Purchase, lease or lease-purchase of equipment or technology exceeding \$500 in value per purchase or lease purchase transaction.
“Equipment” means both equipment and furnishings.
- f. Repair, remodel, reconstruction, improvement or expansion of buildings and the additions to existing buildings.